Student Access to Mental Health Support (SAMHS)  
University Counselling Service (UCS), and 
Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS)  

Client Contract

Student Access to Student Mental Health Support (SAMHS), University Counselling Service (UCS), Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS) and the SAMHS psychiatric lead from University Health Service (UHS), work together to offer students as seamless a service as possible. To do this SAMHS, UCS, DDSS Mental Health Advisors, and UHS psychiatrist at SAMHS share the same records and client notes, and a common confidentiality agreement and client contract.

For these services this document covers:

Confidentiality - Telephone and Online Support - Cancellations and Missed Appointments

Records and Notes - Complaints - Duration of Contract - Our Agreement

Please note that this document has been updated in light of remote working by telephone or Google Meets during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Confidentiality

The work we do together is confidential within our services with the following exceptions:

- If your clinician believes that you, or another person, are at significant risk of harm they will need to share with a third party any information that may reduce that risk. As far as possible we will endeavour to inform you should this arise.
- If information is requested about a client by a court of law, the service must comply and release any information requested which may include any records we hold.
- All clinicians are required to discuss their work in clinical supervision sessions. This ensures our client work meets the highest ethical standards. Clinical supervision is confidential.
- The services sometimes contribute to research about our work with clients. In doing so, we ensure that any identifying details are removed and our clients remain anonymous.

- Telephone and Online Support

During the COVID-19 pandemic we are providing services online or by telephone. To ensure your confidentiality and for you to make best use of the service offered, please take note of the following:

- Ensure that you are in a private space, free from interruption or distraction
- Ensure you answer your phone or join the session at the agreed time. (Note if you are unavailable at the agreed time, we will make one further attempt to contact you, 5-minutes later)
- If for any reason you need to terminate your phone call/online session prematurely, please make every effort to maintain contact with the service via email.

Reviewed May 2020
- Cancellations and missed appointments

In order to offer the best service to all our students, it is important you attend all sessions punctually, whether in person, by phone or online platform. Please take note of the following:

- If you are unable to attend a session with either UCS or SAMHS please email the service at samhs@sheffield.ac.uk to let us know as soon as you decide you cannot attend.
- If you do not attend or cancel a session at short notice (within 2 working days), these sessions are usually lost to the service. If this happens on one occasion, we will write to you to offer another appointment. However, if you then miss the next appointment without giving 2 working days’ notice, we may close your case file. In these circumstances you would need to reregister for an assessment.

If we need to cancel your appointment, we will make every effort to contact you before the session and rearrange the appointment.

- Records and Notes

All our clinical staff are registered with, or accredited by, a professional body (BACP, UKCP, BABCP and NMC) and follow their regulatory requirements, as do our trainees. In line with these and their duty of care, your clinician will maintain a written record summarising the content of each session you have. These notes are stored on a secure server and cannot be accessed from outside the service. After your final session, your notes are retained for a period of 6 years after the last entry before being destroyed. You can request to see your client notes. To do this, you will need to complete a Subject Access Request and return it according to the instructions on the form, accompanied by the correct fee. The form is available from https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection

We adhere to the University’s privacy policy https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/students

Other Data

The service also collects appointment data and equality data to improve service delivery and data from our CCAPS questionnaire (Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms) to support us in fulfilling our duty of care in our assessments and in monitoring response to therapy. Anonymised appointment, equality and CCAPS data is also used from time-to-time for research purposes.

- Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received and this cannot be solved by talking to your counsellor or mental health professional, you may wish to make a complaint. Please visit https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling/contact-us and https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/complaints-and-appeals/complaints-procedure.

- Duration of Contract

The number of sessions offered and frequency that you attend will be agreed between yourself and the clinician working with you. If you are unsure about this, please check with your clinician.
- Our Agreement

At your first appointment, following your assessment, you will be asked to confirm your acceptance of this agreement.

Your clinician will also seek your consent to inform your General Practitioner (GP) at the beginning and end of your contact with the service. We believe this to be best practice, but you are free withhold permission for this and doing so will not affect the service you are offered.